

## Clinical Policy: Liraglutide for Weight Loss (Saxenda)

Reference Number: CP.CPA.332

Effective Date: 06.01.18

Last Review Date: 05.25

Line of Business: Commercial

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

### Description

Liraglutide (Saxenda<sup>®</sup>) is a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist.

### FDA Approved Indication(s)

Saxenda is indicated as an adjunct to a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity for chronic weight management in:

- Adult patients with an initial body mass index (BMI) of:
  - 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or greater (obese), or
  - 27 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or greater (overweight) in the presence of at least one weight-related comorbidity such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, or dyslipidemia.
- Pediatric patients aged 12 years and older with:
  - body weight above 60 kg and an initial BMI corresponding to 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> for adults (obese) by international cut-offs

Limitation(s) of use:

- Saxenda contains liraglutide and should not be coadministered with other liraglutide-containing products or with any other GLP-1 receptor agonists.
- The safety and effectiveness of Saxenda in pediatric patients with type 2 diabetes have not been established.
- The safety and effectiveness of Saxenda in combination with other products intended for weight loss, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, and herbal preparations, have not been established.

### Policy/Criteria

*Provider must submit documentation (such as office chart notes, lab results or other clinical information) supporting that member has met all approval criteria.*

It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation<sup>®</sup> that Saxenda is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

#### I. Initial Approval Criteria

##### A. Weight Management (must meet all):

1. Member meets one of the following (a, b, or c):
  - a. BMI  $\geq$  30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>;
  - b. BMI  $\geq$  27 kg/m<sup>2</sup> with at least one indicator of increased cardiovascular risk (e.g., coronary artery/heart disease, hypertension, dyslipidemia, diabetes, elevated waist circumference) or other obesity-related medical condition (e.g., sleep apnea);

- c. If age is between 12 and 17 years, both of the following (i and ii):
  - i. Body weight > 60 kg;
  - ii. Initial BMI corresponding to 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> for adults (obese) by international cut-offs (*see Appendix D*);
2. One of the following (a or b):
  - a. Members with concurrent type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM): Age ≥ 18 years;
  - b. Members without concurrent T2DM: Age ≥ 12 years;
3. For members with concurrent T2DM, both of the following (a and b):
  - a. Failure of ≥ 3 consecutive months of Ozempic<sup>®</sup> or Rybelsus<sup>®</sup>, Trulicity<sup>®</sup>, and Victoza<sup>®</sup>, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;\*  
*\*Prior authorization may be required*
  - b. If member is currently receiving a GLP-1 receptor agonist and is requesting to switching to Saxenda, medical justification\* supports necessity for Saxenda;  
*\*Intolerance due to common adverse effects of the GLP-1 receptor agonists class such as gastrointestinal symptoms is not considered acceptable medical justification*
4. Saxenda is not prescribed concurrently with other liraglutide -containing products or any other GLP-1 receptor agonist(s);
5. Documentation supports member's participation in a Health plan-approved weight loss program (*see Appendix E*) or other weight loss programs recommended by the prescriber that involves a reduced calorie diet, increased physical activity, and behavioral modification that meets both of the following (a and b):
  - a. Been actively enrolled in a Health plan-approved weight loss program (*see Appendix E*) or other weight loss programs recommended by the prescriber for at least 6 months;
  - b. Will continue to be actively enrolled in a weight loss program while concomitantly prescribed Saxenda;
6. Request meets both of the following (a and b):
  - a. Dose does not exceed 3 mg per day (5 pens per month);
  - b. After the initial dose escalation period (*see Section V*), one of the following (i or ii):
    - i. For age ≥ 18 years: Maintenance dose is 3 mg per day;
    - ii. For age < 18 years: Maintenance dose is at least 2.4 mg per day.

**Approval duration: 16 weeks**

**B. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):**

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
  - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or
  - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or

2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial.

## II. Continued Therapy

### A. Weight Management (must meet all):

1. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
  - a. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
  - b. Member is currently receiving medication and is enrolled in a state and product with continuity of care regulations (*refer to state specific addendums for CC.PHARM.03A and CC.PHARM.03B*);
2. Member is responding positively to therapy as evidenced by one of the following (a or b):
  - a. If this is the first renewal request, one of the following (i or ii):
    - i. For age  $\geq$  18 years: Member has lost  $\geq$  4% of baseline body weight;
    - ii. For age  $<$  18 years: Member has lost  $\geq$  1% of baseline BMI;
  - b. If this is a second or subsequent renewal request, member has lost weight and/or maintained weight loss on therapy;
3. Saxenda is not prescribed concurrently with other liraglutide -containing products or any other GLP-1 receptor agonist(s);
4. Documentation that member is actively enrolled in a weight loss program that involves a reduced calorie diet, increased physical activity, and behavioral modification adjunct to therapy;
5. Request meets both of the following (a and b):
  - a. If request is for a dose increase, new dose does not exceed 3 mg per day (5 pens per month);
  - b. One of the following (i or ii):
    - i. For age  $\geq$  18 years: Maintenance dose is 3 mg per day;
    - ii. For age  $<$  18 years: Maintenance dose is at least 2.4 mg per day.

### Approval duration:

**First reauthorization** – 36 weeks

**Subsequent reauthorizations** – 6 months

### B. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
  - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or
  - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or

2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial.

**III. Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized:**

- A. Non-FDA approved indications, which are not addressed in this policy, unless there is sufficient documentation of efficacy and safety according to the off-label use policy – CP.CPA.09 or evidence of coverage documents.

**IV. Appendices/General Information**

*Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key*

- BMI: body mass index
- FDA: Food and Drug Administration
- GLP-1: glucagon-like peptide-1
- T2DM: type 2 diabetes mellitus

*Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives*

Not applicable

*Appendix C: Contraindications / Boxed Warnings*

- Contraindication(s): personal or family history of medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) or with multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2), pregnancy, patients with a prior hypersensitivity reaction to liraglutide or to any of the excipients in Saxenda.
- Boxed warning(s): risk of thyroid C-cell tumors

*Appendix D: General Information*

- BMI = 703 x [weight (lbs)/height (inches)<sup>2</sup>]
- Examples of coronary artery/heart disease include: coronary artery bypass graft, angina, history of myocardial infarction or stroke.
- Saxenda’s prescribing information recommends that change in body weight is evaluated 16 weeks after initiation of therapy. Saxenda should be discontinued if the patient has not lost at least 4% of baseline body weight, since it is unlikely that the patient will achieve and sustain clinically meaningful weight loss with continued treatment.
- International cut-offs for pediatric patients aged 12 years and older

Age (years)	Body mass index 30 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	
	Males	Females
12	26.02	26.67
12.5	26.43	27.24
13	26.84	27.76
13.5	27.25	28.20
14	27.63	28.57
14.5	27.98	28.87
15	28.30	29.11

Age (years)	Body mass index 30 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	
	Males	Females
15.5	28.60	29.29
16	28.88	29.43
16.5	29.14	29.56
17	29.41	29.69
17.5	29.70	29.84

*Appendix E: Health Plan-Approved Weight Loss Program*

Health Plan	Approved Weight Loss Program
CA	Weight watchers, Active&Fit

**V. Dosage and Administration**

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
Weight management	<p><b>Dose escalation schedule:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week 1: 0.6 mg SC QD</li> <li>• Week 2: 1.2 mg SC QD</li> <li>• Week 3: 1.8 mg SC QD</li> <li>• Week 4: 2.4 mg SC QD</li> <li>• Week 5 and onward: 3 mg SC QD</li> </ul> <p><b>Adult patients:</b> If patients do not tolerate an increased dose during dose escalation, consider delaying dose escalation for approximately one additional week. Discontinue Saxenda if the patient cannot tolerate the 3 mg dose.</p> <p><b>Pediatric patients:</b> Dose escalation for pediatric patients may take up to 8 weeks. Pediatric patients who do not tolerate 3 mg daily may have their dose reduced to 2.4 mg daily. Discontinue Saxenda if the patient cannot tolerate the 2.4 mg dose.</p>	3 mg/day

**VI. Product Availability**

Pre-filled, multi-dose pen: 0.6 mg, 1.2 mg, 1.8 mg, 2.4 mg, or 3 mg (6 mg/mL, 3 mL)

**VII. References**

1. Saxenda Prescribing Information. Plainsboro, NJ: Novo Nordisk Inc.; November 2024. Available at: [www.saxenda.com](http://www.saxenda.com). Accessed January 14, 2025.
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9. Hampl SE, Hassink SG, Skinner AC, et al. Clinical practice guideline for the evaluation and treatment of children and adolescents with obesity [published online ahead of print, 2023 Jan 9]. *Pediatrics.* 2023;e2022060640.

<b>Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>P&amp;T Approval Date</b>
2Q 2021 annual review: added pediatric indication for 12 years and older body weight above 60 kg and an initial BMI corresponding to 30 kg/m for adults (obese) by international cut-offs; references reviewed and updated.	01.29.21	05.21
Clarified minimum dosing requirements per PI.	05.27.21	
2Q 2022 annual review: added “For age < 18 years: Member has lost > 1% of baseline body weight” to criteria defining positive response to therapy for age < 18 years per PI; updated limitations of use per PI; updated international cut-offs for pediatric patients in Appendix D per PI; references reviewed and updated.	01.20.22	05.22
Template changes applied to other diagnoses/indications and continued therapy section.	11.23.22	
2Q 2023 annual review: revised “age < 18 years: member has lost > 1% of baseline body weight” to baseline BMI per PI; removed continued therapy criterion of BMI ≥ 25 kg/m <sup>2</sup> ; references reviewed and updated.	01.11.23	05.23
For documentation of weight loss program, added members has been actively enrolled for at least 6 months, added a weight loss program that also involves behavioral modification, clarified weight loss program to be either a Health Net approved weight loss program or a weight loss program recommended by the prescriber.	12.12.23	02.24

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
2Q 2024 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	01.26.24	05.24
2Q 2025 annual review: clarified for members with concurrent T2DM, age ≥ 18 years; added redirection criteria for members with concurrent T2DM, failure of Ozempic or Rybelsus, Trulicity and Victoza and provider documentation for medical necessity if currently receiving a GLP-1 receptor agonist; added criterion, “Saxenda is not prescribed concurrently with other liraglutide-containing products or any other GLP-1 receptor agonist(s)”; revised language from “Health Net approved weight loss program” to “Health plan-approved weight loss program” with reference to Appendix E; references reviewed and updated.	01.14.25	05.25

**Important Reminders**

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions, and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

**CLINICAL POLICY**  
**Liraglutide for Weight Loss**



This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment, or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions. Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

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